AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (original) A method for utilizing inhibitory relaxation for treating neck muscles, said method comprising:

providing a device for fitting around the neck and over the shoulders of an individual;

providing a mechanism for grasping the ends of said device;

placing said device around neck of an individual;

said individual grasping said device with crossed arms; and

contracting a first set of neck muscles slightly to relax the opposing set of neck muscles.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of relaxing a first set of muscles includes:

stretching the neck muscles in a first direction over said device to contract the muscles on that side of the neck while relaxing the opposing muscles.

3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein said method further includes the step of:

stretching the neck muscles in a second direction over said device to contract the muscles on that side of the neck while relaxing the opposing muscles.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of contracting a first set of neck muscles includes:

stretching the neck muscles in opposing lateral directions over said device.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of contracting a first set of neck muscles includes:

stretching the neck muscles in forward and backward directions over said device.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of contracting a first set of neck muscles includes:

stretching the neck muscles in a rotational direction over said device.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said neck muscles includes the muscles of the upper thoracic body.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said device includes:

isolating muscles by the use of said device.

9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said device includes:

a resilient member that is shaped to fit around the neck of a user.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said device includes:

a bladder that is inflatable to allow adjustment to size and resilience by inflating or deflating of said bladder.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said grasping mechanism includes:

finger holes for allowing a user to insert their fingers for grasping of device.

12. (original) A device for allowing inhibitory relaxation of neck muscles, said device comprising:

an elongated member shaped to fit around the neck of an individual; and

a grasping mechanism on opposing ends of said elongated member for allowing an individual to grasp said elongated member as said elongated member is wrapped around the neck of the individual.

13. (original) The device of claim 12 wherein said device includes:

said elongated member having resilient portion for allowing an individual to stretch their neck muscles over said device.

14. (original) The device of claim 12 wherein said device includes:

an inflatable portion on said elongated member to allow an individual to stretch their neck muscles over said device.

15. (original) The device of claim 12 wherein said device includes:

an inflatable portion on said elongated member to allow an individual to stretch their neck muscles over said device; and

a mechanism to regulate the inflation of said inflatable portion.

16. (original) The device of claim 12 wherein said grasping mechanism includes:

finger holes formed in said device to allow an individual to grasp the opposing end portions of said elongated member as said device is placed around the neck of an individual.

17. (original) The device of claim 12 wherein said device includes:

a shape that allows lateral motion, forward and backward motion and rotational motion of the neck of the user of said device.

18. (original) A device for allowing inhibitory relaxation of neck and upper thoracic muscles of an individual, said device comprising:

an inflatable member shaped to fit around the neck of an individual; and

finger holes formed on opposing ends of said device to allow an individual to grasp the device with the hands of their arms crossed over the front of their body.

19. (original) A method for training the neck muscles, said method comprising:

providing an elastically compressible device for fitting around the neck and over the shoulders of an individual;

providing a mechanism for grasping the ends of said device;

placing said device around the neck of an individual;

grasping said mechanism for grasping the ends of said device; and

contracting neck muscles in such a way that the head and neck move to compress said device so that forces generated by said elastic compression opposing said movement of head and neck.

20. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said elastically compressible device comprises an air filled bladder.

21. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said elastically compressible device comprises a bladder made of elastomeric material.

22. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said step of grasping said mechanism includes:

crossing arms in front of the chest to grasp said device.

23. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein the outer surface of said device is textured.

24. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said method further includes the step of:

utilizing inhibitory relaxation for treating muscles by contracting one set of neck muscles to relax the opposing set of muscles.

25. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said step of contracting a first set of muscles includes:

stretching the muscles in forward and backward direction over said device.

26. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said step of contracting a first set of muscles includes:

stretching the muscles in a rotational direction over said device.

27. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said muscles includes the muscles of the upper thoracic body and neck.

28. (original) A device for allowing exercise of the neck muscles, said device comprising:

an elongated top member;

an elongated bottom member; and

a sealing mechanism for sealing said top member to said bottom member in such a way as to create an air tight cavity.

29. (original) The device of claim 28 wherein said device further includes:

a valve mechanism for introducing and trapping air into said air tight cavity.

30. (original) The device of claim 28 wherein said device further includes:

a grasping mechanism on opposing ends of said elongated member for allowing an individual to grasp said elongated member as said elongated member is wrapped around the neck of the individual.

31. (new) A resilient neck and upper thoracic spinal region training device for a patient, comprising:

a flexible, resilient, generally elongated member having two ends; and

a means for securing the device around the neck and upper thoracic spinal region.

32. (new) The device of claim 31 wherein the means for securing includes an extended member at each end.

33. (new) The device of claim 31 wherein the elongated member is inflatable.

34. (new) The device of claim 32 wherein one or more extended members further includes one or more voids.

35. (new) The device of claim 31 wherein the elongated member further comprises a top portion and a bottom portion, and the bottom portion includes curvature for fitting around a patient's neck and upper thoracic spinal region.

36. (new) The device of claim 35 wherein the curvature includes a central bulge.

37. (new) The device of claim 35 wherein the curvature includes a recess at each end.

38. (new) The device of claim 31 wherein the elongated member comprises material having a low spring constant.

39. (new) An elastically compressible neck and upper thoracic spinal region training device for a patient, comprising:

means for providing reciprocal inhibition of primary mover muscles; and

means for isolating core stabilizer musculature of the neck and upper thoracic spine for strengthening.

40. (new) The device of claim 39 wherein the device is inflatable.

41. (new) The device of claim 39 wherein the device comprises a low spring constant material.

42. (new) The device of claim 40 wherein the device further comprises a plurality of separately inflatable compartments.

43. (new) An effective, low cost, easy-to-manufacture device for promoting strength and flexibility in deep postural muscles in a patient comprising:

an elongated member having a low spring coefficient and two ends; and

handhold means for securing the device located on either end of the elongated member.

44. (new) The device of claim 43 wherein the elongated member further includes a top end and a bottom end; and

and the bottom end includes a protuberance adapted for a patient's upper thoracic spinal region.

45. (new) The device of claim 44 wherein the bottom end further comprises arcuate recesses complimentary to the patient's shoulders.